DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 363 EA 019 578

AUTHOR Roid, Gale H.
TITLE At-Risk Youth Programs in Oregon: A Sourcebook of Program Ideas for Public Schools.
INSTITUTION Oregon State Dept. of Education, Salem.
PUB DATE Feb 87
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Problems; *Cooperative Planning; *Demonstration Programs; Dropout Research; *Dropouts; Elementary Secondary Education; *High Risk Students; Individualized Education Programs; Needs Assessment; Program Effectiveness; *Public Schools; School District Size; School Statistics; Social Influences; State Surveys; *Student Needs; Student School Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Oregon

ABSTRACT

This sourcebook describes methods of dealing with dropouts in Oregon school districts. "At-risk youth" and "dropout" are defined and survey results of 98 percent of superintendents concerning program offerings are summarized. Data suggest that medium-size districts require greatest assistance. Despite increases in single-parent households and drug and alcohol abuse, results reveal that at-risk programs are only emerging. Types of systems, programs, and projects are detailed. Information sources for these approaches are provided. Systems are based on effective schools research, data-based monitoring, or screening and follow-up. A program is an integrated, long-term series of projects. Examples from large, medium, and small districts are presented. Projects, classified and exemplified by schools, include: (1) educational--Forest Grove High School's individualized project; (2) alcohol and drug awareness/treatment--Eugene's IMPACT program; (3) health and mental health--North Eugene High School's health center; (4) teen pregnancy--Eugene's Opportunity Center; (5) family services--Portland's Project RETURN; (6) vocational--Salem's Construction Cluster; (7) counseling/guidance--Santa Clara Elementary School's Mentor/Advocate project; (8) staff development--Springfield's multifaceted project; and (9) community action--Portland's Leaders Roundtable Planning project. Recommendations include personalization in planning, increasing elementary prevention programs, and reviewing "excellence" reforms to ensure access for at-risk youth. (CJH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED284363

AT-RISK YOUTH PROGRAMS IN OREGON:

A Sourcebook of Program Ideas for Public Schools

•February, 1987

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

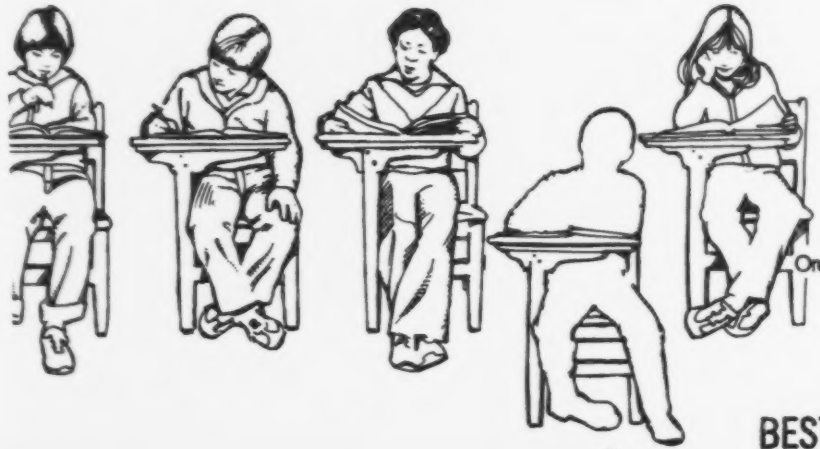
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. J. Case

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 019 578



Verne A. Duncan
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Student Services
Oregon Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway SE
Salem, Oregon 97310-0290

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FOREWORD

This report, completed while Dr. Gale H. Roid was a consultant with Assessment Research in Salem, Oregon, reinforces prior research on continuing problems relating to dropouts and potential dropouts in our Oregon school systems.

The study defines these at-risk youth in detail, as well as a number of exemplary programs specifically targeted to reach them. Clearly, instituting more comprehensive approaches statewide will cost schools and other agencies time and money when they are already faced with shrinking budgets and resources. However, statistics show we will pay even more dearly for the alternative of nonaction.

In addition to the irreplaceable loss in human potential, there are some very real economic consequences to the dropout phenomenon. A national study--projected in terms of Oregon high school dropouts aged 25-34--estimates we will lose approximately $720 million in tax revenues, $31 million in welfare and unemployment costs, and $31 million in crime and crime prevention costs.

Several important conclusions have emerged as a result of this report. One is the need for personalization and relevance in planning programs. The most promising ideas currently in operation in Oregon schools appear to be highly individualized and pertinent to the future working or educational lives of those concerned.

A second finding indicates the need to establish or increase elementary school prevention programs aimed at developing key study habits and basic-skills mastery--programs that can be implemented by instituting school-effectiveness reforms at the elementary level.

Finally, the survey points out a need to review the heightened "standards of excellence" reforms in education in terms of at-risk youth--since these students may be adversely affected if access and equity are not given equal priority to excellence.

The problems of dropouts and at-risk youth are real and the need is NOW in Oregon. It is time to face the issue head-on. To that result, this report furnishes valuable assistance in its detailed information on the systems, programs and projects you can adapt to your own community's needs.

For further information about at-risk youth contact Dr. Les Adkins, Director of Student Services, Department of Education, 378-5585.

Verne A. Duncan
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

NOTE: Dr. Gale H. Roid, formerly a consultant with Assessment Research, PO Box 8900-330, Salem, Oregon 97303, is now with The Psychological Corporation, 555 Academic Court, San Antonio, Texas 78204. The comments, opinions, and suggestions contained herein are not intended as statements of the official policy of any agency--including the Oregon Department of Education, unless otherwise stated in separate documentation.

It is the policy of the State Board of Education and a priority of the Oregon Department of Education that there will be no discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, color, sex, marital status, religion, national origin, age or handicap in any educational programs, activities, or employment. Persons having questions about equal opportunity and nondiscrimination should contact the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Oregon Department of Education.

105031987700

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AT-RISK YOUTH PROGRAMS IN OREGON

The Educational Challenge 1
Definitions of Key Terms 2
Survey Results 3

A SOURCEBOOK OF PROGRAM IDEAS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduction 5
Types of Systems, Programs and Projects 5

SYSTEMS 6
Effective-schools approaches 6
Monitoring and profiling approaches 8
Screening and follow-up 10

PROGRAMS 11
A large-district program 12
A medium-district program 13
A small-district program 14
A school-based program 14

PROJECTS 16
Educational 16
Alcohol and Drug 16
Health and Mental Health 16
Teen Pregnancy 17
Family Services 17
Vocational and Prevocational 17
Counseling and Guidance 18
Staff Development 18
Community Involvement 19

Conclusion 19
References 20

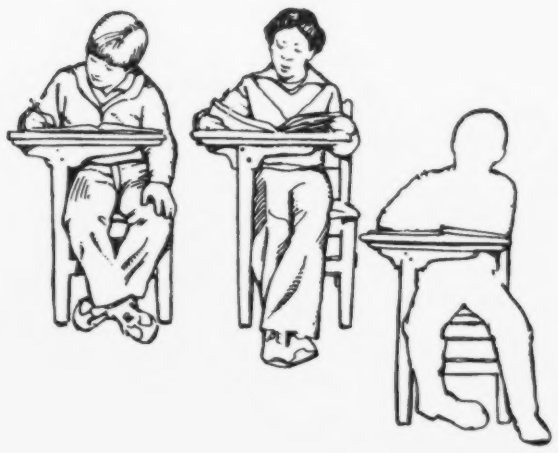
AT-RISK YOUTH PROGRAMS IN OREGON

The Educational Challenge

As states such as Oregon pursue the goal of educational excellence, the dilemma of an increasing dropout rate in the nation's schools grows in significance. In fact, this very goal of raising overall standards in school programs--without special regard for the needs of youth-at-risk--may actually compound the problem.

The challenge for education is to provide for excellence as well as equity and access for all students. And answering this challenge may call for new types of programs to keep disadvantaged and minority students--those who have higher rates of dropping out--in school.

To learn more about what has been done and what is needed, the present programs for at-risk youth in Oregon schools were recently surveyed. The results are presented in this report, along with descriptions of exemplary programs and projects. The report itself is thus a sourcebook for educators who are looking for new ways to approach the dropout and at-risk youth problems.



Definitions of Key Terms

AT-RISK YOUTH

"At-risk youth" are defined as students of public school age who have dropped out of school or who have demonstrated the characteristics which contribute to the probability of leaving school prior to high school graduation. This includes those who experience a complex of circumstances that may be life-threatening, and those who are at risk of an unsuccessful transition to the world of work and adult productivity.

The probability of leaving school early is highly predictable. There are many visible "early warning" signs, such as low academic self concept, failing grades, significant numbers of absences and tardiness, behavior disorders and disruptiveness, and early retention leading to an "over-aged" status in the final years of high school. Such factors, along with minority or economic-disadvantaged status, multiply the "risk" that a student may leave school prior to obtaining a regular high school diploma.

Young people involved in substance abuse, family discord, traumatic events such as sexual or physical abuse, or--in the case of female students--pregnancy with or without marriage are also considered at risk. Statistically these factors have been shown to lead to an early termination of schooling since they place the student at risk for depression, stress, potential suicide, or other threatening circumstances.

In addition, "at risk" refers to those who may not make a successful transition to the world of work or higher education. After high school students are rightfully expected to move on to productive roles as citizens, consumers, parents, adult learners, workers, and other positive community functions. If the transition from public school only leads to continued unemployment and impoverishment, the goals of public education have not been fully achieved and the adult does not become a contributing member of our society.

DROPOUT

The term "dropout" is defined as an elementary or secondary school student who, for any reason other than death, has not, by age 21, graduated or completed an equivalent course of study. Students are not counted as dropouts when a request for transfer of records is received by the reporting district from another school in or outside of the state within 45 days.

This report describes different approaches to the progression of events for students who are not successful in school. Some students may experience a temporary discontinuance of schooling. Others terminate school prior to obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent; they do NOT transfer or enroll in an alternative educational program and do not subsequently re-enroll or complete a high school diploma program. Since the true dropout can only be established through longitudinal study or "tracking" across time (until the individual exceeds the legal age for compulsory schooling), public school programs will have to be designed to target both the temporary and permanent types of dropout or the total numbers of students to be served.

Current trends in Oregon indicate the annual average attrition rate for public schools is approximately five to seven percent. This figure compares the number of students as of October 1, from 1978 to 1986, in grades 9 through 11 against the following year's count in grades 10 through 12.

The four-year attrition rate for Oregon schools, based on a specific graduating class, ranges from 27% to 30% from 1978 to 1986. These percentages represent the accumulative attrition of students in a specific graduating class beginning with the students as freshmen and continuing until their senior/graduation year.

For the graduating class of 1986, data from school districts showed that 1,222 students received alternative awards (i.e., certificates of completion). These students completed four years of high school. Subtracting these students from the four-year attrition rate for that year would lower the dropout rate to 25%.

Survey Results

In the fall of 1986, all school district superintendents in Oregon were mailed a questionnaire survey on at-risk programs in their districts. A separate report (Roid, 1987) details the results of that survey, which are briefly summarized here to help place in perspective the program descriptions that follow in the body of this report.

The initial questionnaire had an 86% return rate, with 262 out of 305 districts reporting. Phone contacts were then made with the 53 remaining districts. The 48 responses resulted in a final total of 98% responding districts.

Each district was asked to indicate whether an at-risk coordinator had been named; the kinds of programs for at-risk students offered at district, high school, middle school, and elementary levels; and the kinds of reports or studies written and available for distribution.

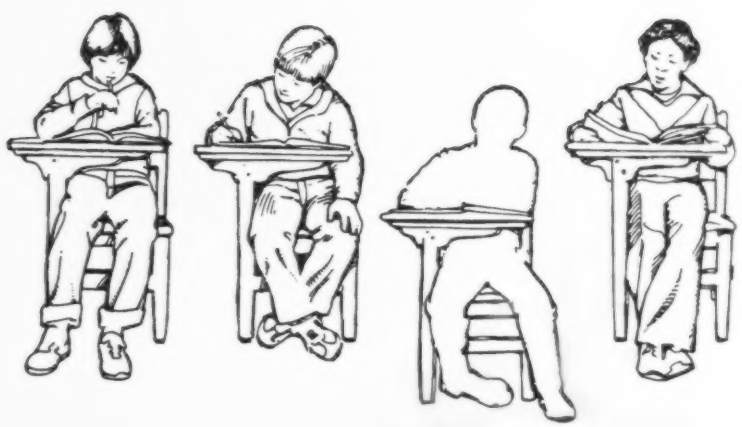
The percentage of districts with named coordinators ranged from 29% at the elementary level to 36-37% at the district and middle school levels, and 57% at the high school level.

In terms of programs, the most widely implemented were substance-abuse awareness, early-detection screening, and the types of programs that form part of regular school offerings (e.g., counseling and guidance, staff development, regular classroom coverage of health and mental health, family issues, pregnancy, and career preparation). Emerging programs specifically labeled "For At-Risk Youth" are those serving individuals (e.g., alcohol or drug treatment, teen-mother programs, and Job Training Partnership Act or JTPA).

The breakdown of survey results by school level suggests the need for assistance in designing and supporting youth at-risk programs is greatest in medium-sized districts (enrollments of 500-3,000 students), since the numbers of at-risk youth in these districts may exceed the resources available to provide specialized programs for them. Although larger numbers of at-risk youth are often located in the bigger districts, those districts frequently have data-processing, evaluation, and special education services to provide support for at-risk youth program development. In the small and often

rural districts, school personnel claim to "know where each and every student is and we track each one," a fact supported by evidence from a follow-up phone survey.

Statistical trends in Oregon--such as increasing percentages of single-parent and father-absent households, and the continuing rates of high alcohol and drug abuse (e.g., marijuana and cocaine at rates higher than the national averages as reported by the Oregon Office of Alcohol and Drug Programs in 1986)--indicate at-risk rates will continue to rise. Yet survey results suggest programs specifically labeled and targeted for at-risk students are only now emerging in significant numbers in Oregon school districts. Thus an expanded awareness program appears to be sorely needed.



A SOURCEBOOK OF PROGRAM IDEAS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduction

Although programs specifically targeted for at-risk youth will clearly cost money and time, the alternative of nonaction also has serious economic consequences. In 1972, Levin projected national economic costs of $71 billion in lost tax revenue from high school dropouts aged 25-34, $3 billion in welfare and unemployment costs, and an additional $3 billion in costs for crime and crime prevention. In Oregon, this can be translated to approximately $720 million in tax revenue losses, $31 million in welfare and unemployment, and $31 million in crime and crime prevention costs, presumably over the lifetime of dropouts occurring during a ten-year span (aged 25-34).*

These economic consequences reinforce the results of the statewide survey of school districts. In fact, using a conservative 5% dropout rate in an average-sized high school with an enrollment of 725, we may lose four students per month at each of our high schools by delaying further for planning, needs assessment, and board approval. As Mann said in 1985, "Better practice ought not to wait on more research." Oregon needs new programs for at-risk youth now.

Types of Systems, Programs, and Projects

The following three categories form a useful set of distinctions for types of systems, program and projects:

1. System: When an entire state, ESD, or district develops and integrated, long-term, data based (using continuing evaluation studies) approach to at-risk youth, the term "system" is used to describe the activity.

2. Program: When a district or school building develops an integrated, long-term set of projects, whether data-based or not, the term "program" is employed.

3. Project: When a school, department in a school, or an individual teacher implements an experimental approach to at-risk youth, the term "project is applied.

Suggested ideas, derived from the survey of Oregon schools, will be discussed for each category in turn.

---

*Levin's 1972 national projections have been applied to Oregon's--on the basis of Oregon's share of the U.S. population which is approximately one percent (.0112) and Oregon's per capita income figure which is slightly lower than the national rate (estimated at .91).

SYSTEMS

The three major types of systems that are expected to have an impact on youth at-risk in Oregon schools are (1) those based on the effective-schools research, (2) those based on the concept of data-based monitoring and profiling, and (3) screening and follow-up programs.

Effective-Schools Approaches.

The effective schools movement makes three major assumptions (Bickel, 1983): first, that you can identify schools unusually effective in teaching all students, including minority and disadvantaged; second, that these schools exhibit characteristics which can be correlated with achievement gains in basic skills--skills that are changeable by educators; and third, that these characteristics can be described and transplanted to schools not deemed successful. The works of Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Edmonds (1981), Frederickson (1975) and others show that effective schools are usually described as having some combination of the following:

1. A climate of high expectation in which all students, regardless of socioeconomic or academic background, are believed to be capable of mastering basic skills objectives.

2. A clarity of purpose that places acquisition of basic skills as the top priority over all other school activities.

3. Strong leadership from the administration, particularly the principal, who communicates a deep commitment to the instructional needs of students.

4. An atmosphere that is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and thus, conducive to instruction.

5. A commitment to methods of implementing a monitoring system for student progress that fosters accountability for basic-skills achievement.

Research on effective schools, such as that gathered by Sexton in 1985, is particularly relevant to the issue of at-risk youth and dropouts. In a study of all Portland high schools, Sexton found the dropout rate to be associated with "school of attendance" to a greater degree than other demographic factors such as geographic location of residence. In other words, the particular nature of an individual school could be directly associated with fostering or minimizing the trend toward dropping out among its students.

Several aspects of effective schools have direct bearing on the at-risk youth. The first is the expectation for mastery of basic skills--sincere and directed at the previously unsuccessful student. At-risk students often continue in a downward spiral of negative expectations. It is this spiral that must be broken.

The priority of basic skills instruction and the increase in quality "time on task" for the at-risk student is the second aspect, particularly where there is individualized assistance regardless of the amount of time the student remains in school. In other words, if time is limited with at-risk students, the more efficiently and effectively it is focused on the basics they will need in order to survive, the better it will be.

Finally, the climate of positive orderliness and calmness in an effective school may obviate some of the negative reactions at-risk students typically experience (Peng & Takai, 1983).

The effective schools plan for systematic change can be implemented by utilizing one or more of the following

steps: (1) have all staff at the building level read and discuss the major references on effective schooling cited; (2) have staff attend workshops on effective schooling (such as those provided by NWREL, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory); and (3) assess the climate and other factors in the school using instruments such as that of Brookover et al. (1978--see address in source material below).

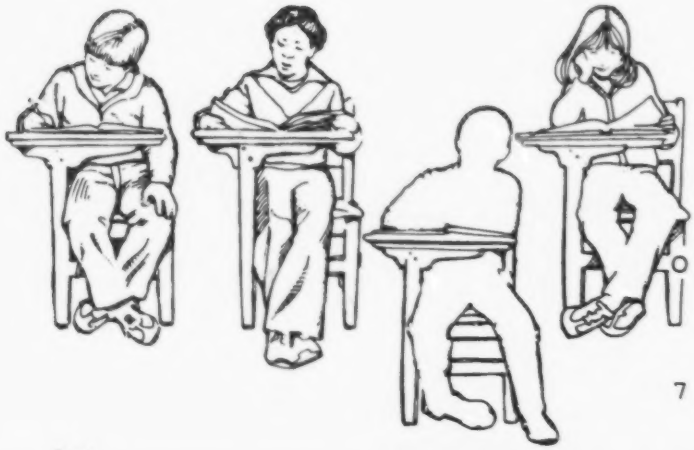
A number of Oregon schools have participated in the NWREL workshops and a few have published written reports on their progress in the form of "school profiles" (e.g., Tigard, Lake Oswego, and Centennial high schools, and Milwaukie Junior High). In addition, Klamath Union High School reported progress, especially in the monitoring of attendance, after implementing effective schools programs.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION ON SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

1. The journal, *Educational Leadership* (December, 1982 and September, 1985 issues).

2. Onward to Excellence Workshops, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Attn: Dr. Bob Blum), 300 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204, (503) 248-6800.

3. "School Learning Climate Assessment Instrument," by Prof. Wilbur Brookover, Urban Affairs Program, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.



Monitoring and Profiling Approaches.

Another type of systems approach to improving the functioning of the entire school, including the conduct and progress of at-risk youth, is monitoring. Monitoring involves the regular and systematic scanning of data on student and staff functioning at the building level. The usual categories of data that are monitored by the school principal include:

1. Achievement in basic skills (but also in higher-level thinking)

2. School climate (includes expectation levels, orderliness, and instructional leadership)

3. Resources and demographics of the school (teacher/student ratio, class size, etc.)

4. Effective instructional practices (classroom observations, time-on-task, implementation of teaching behaviors)

5. Conduct and discipline (attendance rates, suspensions, etc.)

6. Student transition to work or higher education (vocational preparation, dropouts, transfers, GEDs, SAT scores and percent college enrollees)

As part of the monitoring process, some schools publish a yearly report, called a "profile," in which all data for a given school year are compiled and presented in graphic, tabular, and narrative form.

To have maximum effect on the dropout rate in Oregon schools, profiling and monitoring must begin at the elementary level. The patterns of failure and low motivation that lead to early high school termination often begin in the primary grades. As the result of monitoring and profiling workshops, a few of the elementary schools in the Portland metropolitan area have recently generated comprehensive school profiles.

Excellent examples of high school profiles are those compiled annually for all Portland Public School senior high schools (Management Information Services, 1986), and those of Centennial, Tigard, Lake Oswego and Lakeridge high schools.

A number of monitoring ments have direct bearing on at-risk students. First, in monitoring achievement, all students below a GPA of 2.0 are tracked and their progress is plotted so that early warning signs of disproportionate failure can be identified. Another useful display of data is the percentage of students at or above grade level (as measured by standardized tests), particularly if students of low socioeconomic levels are displayed separately (e.g., identified by reduced-price lunch or other means). In addition, the percentages of students in each quartile of basic skills achievement should be reported routinely (e.g., in publisher's printouts of achievement-test results) so that the percentage in the lowest quartile can be tracked. The goal, clearly, would be to reduce the percentage in the lower quartile.

In terms of school climate, the degree to which teachers have high expectations and belief that minority and disadvantaged students can master basic skills should be measured at least annually. If the at-risk youth perceives that "no one believes in me," the risk of dropping out multiplies. School climate measures reviewed by Arter (1986), including the Brookover method listed in the previous section, are available for such monitoring.

For effective instructional practices, direct classroom observations or teacher self-report questionnaires might be used to monitor the teaching methods aimed at at-risk students. A regional consultant, Jerry Conrath (Conrath, 1984; 1986) has developed a series of teaching behaviors and methods targeted for at-risk students in the classroom. Following staff-development workshops, the

implementation of teaching behaviors could be monitored--for instance, through methods such as "peer coaching" in which pairs of teachers assist and observe each other.

The monitoring of conduct and discipline data has a natural connection to at-risk students. Their potential alienation from school is often reflected in misconduct, absence, fighting, alcohol or drug use, and suspension or expulsion. Monitoring the statistics on each of these conduct areas within a building should provide a natural "thermometer" to the degree of the problem. Recent data by deJung and Duckworth (1986) and Schellenberg (1985) confirms the particular importance of monitoring absenteeism to discriminate between dropouts and graduates. Since a number of schools in Oregon currently use such data, a "flag" should be raised when any student has over 10 days of absence. Statistics have shown a higher probability for dropping out as the number of absences per year increase above the 10-12 day range.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MONITORING AND PROFILING

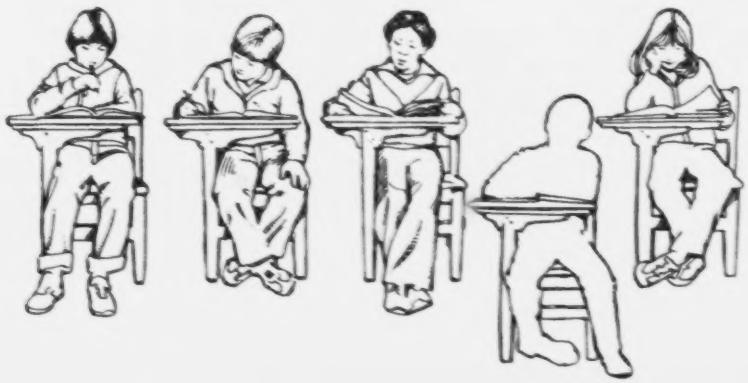
1. The Oregon Department of Education (Assessment and Evaluation Office, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310) assists in the development of annual school profiles. Contact Steve Slater at (503) 378-4157.

2. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory offers workshops on Monitoring and Profiling, through its Goal-Based Education Program. Contact Dr. Bob Blum or Nancy Olson at (503) 248-6800.

3. Also from NWREL, a "Consumers Guide to Assessing School Climate." Authored by Judith Arter, NWREL, 300 SW Sixth Ave., Portland, OR 97204.

4. For information on Jerry Conrath's workshops, contact Nancy Golden, Springfield School District, 525 Mill Street, Springfield, OR 97477 (503) 726-3202, where recent inservice trainings were held.

5. Request sample school "profiles" from the following schools (each may have a policy concerning distribution of profiles):
   a. Centennial High School, 3505 SE 182nd, Gresham, OR 97030
   b. Lake Oswego Senior High School, 2501 SW Country Club Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034
   c. Milwaukie Junior High School, 2300 SE Harrison, Milwaukie, OR 97222
   d. Tigard High School, 9000 SW Durham Road, Tigard, OR 97224



Screening and Follow-up.

A final systems approach to the at-risk problem is one of comprehensive screening, early identification and follow-up. Screening is considered a systems approach because it is typically school- or district-wide, and should result in the placement or referral of students to appropriate interventions. To positively identify at-risk youth, screening should be a continuing effort, not simply a temporary program or special project.

In addition to traditional areas of screening such as learning disabilities, early identification of at-risk youth involves the measurement of (1) emotional or behavioral disorders, (2) school attitudes, and (3) academic self concept.

Recent work by Walker and Severson (1985) is noteworthy in advocating a cost-effective three-stage or "gating" system of screening for students who are severely behavior disordered at the elementary school level. Such a system begins with an inexpensive method of assessment--teacher rankings or nominations in classrooms. Then increasingly detailed or costly assessments are added as the more severe cases are identified. For example, following the initial teacher rankings, a detailed teacher checklist is used for certain identified at-risk children. When students exceed normal criteria in the checklist, referral for assessment by counselors or school psychologists is recommended.

The two major areas of behavior disorders measured in the Walker and Severson system are "internalizing" and "externalizing," the two key dimensions of child-behavior disorders identified by Achenbach (1979). Internalizing includes depression and anxiety; externalizing encompasses aggression, acting-out, and a variety of antisocial behaviors that clash with school-conduct norms.

Another multi-stage approach to screening at-risk youth is found in the work of Reynolds (1984). He advocated following an initial screening for adolescent depression with the use of a suicide-risk screen. The process was concluded with referral and individualized assessment. Such a method would identify students at-risk for self-harm due to family problems or substance-abuse related emotional reactions. One experimental screening program for adolescent depression was recently approved in the Springfield (OR) School District. It will be completed by researchers from the Oregon Research Institute in Eugene.

In the area of school attitudes, Dolan and Enos (1985) provide a widely used measure. At-risk youth often display negative attitudes toward school that can be identified on such measuring instruments as far below the norm (Conrath, 1986).

In the area of academic self-concept, instruments by Piers (1984), or Brookover (see source information following) are often used. For screening purposes, the lowest 5% of children on such measures could be referred for individual consultation, particularly if done in a non-stigmatizing way in the early grades. A composite profile of an entire school, taken from the Piers (1984) measure of self-concept, appeared in the comprehensive school profile of a school in the Tri-County area near Portland.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON SCREENING

1. Walker, H.M., & Severson, H. (1985) *Standardized screening and identification of behavior disordered pupils in the elementary age range: Rationale, procedures, and guidelines.* Eugene, OR: Center on Human Development, University of Oregon, 901 E 18th, Eugene, OR 97403.

2. Reynolds, William. "Adolescent Depression Inventory." Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc., Box 98, Odessa, FL 33556.

3. List of Commercially Available Instruments for Assessing Student Performance. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 300 SW Sixth Ave., Portland, OR 97204. (in "Profiling for School Effectiveness" materials, Goal-Based Education Program).

4. "School Attitude Measure" by Dolar & Enos, American Testronics, Box 2270, Iowa City, IA 52243.

5. "The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale," by Ellen Piers (1984), published by Western Psychological Services, 12031 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025.

6. Brookover, Wilbur. *Self-concept of Academic Ability.* 142 E Owen Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

PROGRAMS

In this report, a program was defined as an integrated, long-term series of projects offered by a district or school. A program differs from a system in that it may not be as data-based, and it is not usually characterized as involving the broad change-orientation found in the effective-schools movement. Nor is a program characterized by monitoring or screening functions. Instead, a program involves more focused, direct-service projects of an ongoing nature.

Several elements influenced the selection of the three district programs and one school-based program highlighted in this section of the report. Space restrictions alone prohibit an exhaustive survey of all programs in the state. Detailed information is also difficult to provide in cases where programs themselves are too new or have not yet received written documentation. Last, by the very virtue of district size, one of the most comprehensive programs in the state for at-risk youth is in the Portland Public Schools. However, since the reader has the benefit of extensive existing documentation on Portland progams*, individual projects in Portland are described under "projects" in this report.

The examples chosen for featured description were the programs in a large (Eugene), medium (Oakridge), and small (Dayville, Grant County) district. Also selected was the program at Forest Grove High School. Each will be described in turn.

*Documentation on Portland programs can be found in Management Information Services, 1986; Research and Evaluation Department, 1985; Sexton, 1985; and Yagi, 1986.

A Large District Program.

Over a period of years, an integrated program of services, projects, and studies on at-risk youth has been developed in the Eugene Public School District. A comprehensive study by Schellenberg (1985) provided essential data on dropouts in the class of 1984 and pointed to a number of critical dimensions for program focus. For example, the study documented the predictive power of attendance in discriminating between dropouts and graduates, with the cut-off point for optional classification at 10 absences. Thus, projects aimed at decreasing absenteeism were suggested by the data, and school personnel were alerted to monitor attendance data as a risk factor in dropping out.

The list below shows the variety and types of projects that form the Eugene at-risk program:

A. Elementary Projects
   1. After-school class
   2. Mentor/Advocate program ("buddy" or encourager" system)
   3. Home/school worker (family intervention, Chapter 1)
   4. Junior first grade (aimed at low-achieving kindergartners)
   5. Impact program (training for staff on substance abuse interventions)
   6. Peer tutoring
   7. Impacted school program (additional counselor in three schools with highest student "turnover" or transiency)

B. Middle School Projects
   1. Guide programs (one staff monitors about 20 students)
   2. Peer counseling
   3. Mentor/Advocate program
   4. Impact program
   5. Refusal skills curriculum (training in saying "no" to drugs and other substances)
   6. Impacted schools program
   7. Pathfinders (outdoor education for low self-concept students)
   8. Home/school worker
   9. Opportunity Center (8th graders alternative program at separate school site)

C. High School Projects
   1. Impact programs
   2. Night school (for students who have failed a day-school class or students referred at two high schools)
   3. Opportunity Center (alternative high school with GED and district diploma programs)
   4. Lane Community College (diploma granted from the school district for coursework completed at LCC by referral)
   5. Cooperative enrollments (credits earned for high school and at LCC or University of Oregon)
   6. Cooperative Cosmetology program (dual enrollment in local beauty schools and high school)
   7. Student on-leave program (experimental program for at-risk predropouts who are given one term to be out on-leave--with jobs, alternative education, and family counseling--while maintaining enrollment)
   8. Project Success (highly effective project providing intense mentorship to 20 students in each of two high schools, including life survival skills)
   9. Police Liaison project (two plainclothes officers in two high schools)
   10. Substance abuse counselor (designated existing staff or contracted counselor at each high school)
   11. JTPA Inschool programs

12. Home/school instruction (for hospitalized substance abuse recoverers)
13. School-based health clinic (experimental center at North Eugene HS, funded by State Health Dept.)
14. Computerized period-by-period attendance systems (each high school with automated home calling)
15. Individualized graduation plans (altered graduation requirements approved by counselor, administrator, and school board)

D. District Projects
1. Parent Trainer (1.0 FTE position)
2. Teacher-parent consultant (for severe behavior disorders)
3. Multicultural education (promotes multicultural awareness, Project Reach at middle school, and Native American awareness program)
4. Native American tutoring program
5. Additional use of district personnel on a referral basis for at-risk youth (social workers, school nurses, school psychologists, home-instruction teachers, and itinerant ESL teachers)

NOTE: For more information, contact Robert Stalick, Assistant Superintendent, Eugene School District, 200 N Monroe, Eugene, OR 97402-5295 (503) 687-3123

The rationale and purposes behind Eugene's chosen at-risk projects included (1) the need to target the high schools with the highest recorded dropout rates; (2) the goal of impacting individual students in a highly personal way; and, (3) where possible, the desire to fund projects through existing sources (e.g., Chapter 1, JTPA, or student-pay-as-you-go).

Some aspects in the complex of projects are noteworthy. Several projects reach students who are economically disadvantaged or culturally different, including the experimental health clinic serving students who are either not provided with adequate medical care at home or who are not well trained in self-care. Some projects, such as the Mentor/Advocate program, also involve little direct outlay of district or school funds. This program involves existing school personnel (not necessarily teachers) who become "special friends" to individual students. It is described more fully under Counseling and Guidance projects.

A Medium-Sized District Program.

With an enrollment of 925 students, the Oakridge (Lane County), Oregon, School District is probably smaller than other medium-sized districts in Oregon. However, its pattern of projects is more extensive than might be expected for its size.

A serious community need and a genuine concern that "kids shouldn't be out of school," has motivated Oakridge to institute a variety of projects for at-risk youth. When a major lumber mill closed for six months, economic pressures were great on families in the community and a portion of the high school at-risk youth chose to find employment.

To meet the needs of students seeking GEDs following a period of dropping out, Oakridge secured an agreement with nearby Lane Community College (in Eugene) to open a location in Oakridge. The long drive to Eugene, especially in the winter, was just enough to prevent some students from completing their programs. The new agreement promises to reverse the trend.

In times of community stress, alcohol and drug usage rates can also be expected to increase. Therefore, Project IMPACT training, provided by Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene, was completed by 13 teachers and staff.

Educational Service District (ESD) funding assisted in this project, which included four days of intensive training to instruct staff members in both techniques for dealing with student and parental behaviors and attitudes, and in methods for linking students to treatment options via referral.

An additional element in the Oakridge program is a tutoring project for students who are out of school due to expulsion or suspension. Reaching this high risk group should be assured with the institution of such a personalized approach.

A Small District Program.

As mentioned earlier in this report, small districts--those with enrollment less than 500 students--often comment that "they know where each and every student is" and the individual reasons for at-risk status. To validate this claim, a personal follow-up by the author was conducted with the Dayville (Grant County) School District. The findings were remarkable.

Three dropout cases recently occurred in Dayville, with a total enrollment of 74 students and a high school enrollment of only 32. One student began working at a local grocery store and his new "wealth" enabled him to afford an automobile, generating considerable interest among other students. A second student, perhaps envious of the first, followed suit, but sought work in Pendleton instead. This student later earned a GED. A final student has been on probation and may drop out permanently in May of this reporting year.

In response to these needs and to prevent further occurrences, the wife of the superintendent volunteered to conduct an individual tutoring program for at-risk students. These students were found to procrastinate, possess few good study habits, and to be generally immature. The individual tutoring program, along with an independent study hall, has a targeted goal of improving study habits. It involves "bird-dogging" work assignments until they are completed. During the program, students are not labeled "at-risk" and other students in the high school do not seem to project any "stigma" on the tutored students.

The program has been unusually effective, reversing poor study habits formed in grade school. However, it appears to be largely fueled by the particular skills of the head tutor. Her unusual ability involves communicating acceptance and respect to students without "babying them." As with many educational innovations, such a program may not be duplicable without this highly skilled individual.

A School-Based Program.

Forest Grove High School, located in Washington County, Oregon with an enrollment of 1,226, has a unique and comprehensive program for at-risk students. The need for a special program became clear when too many students were being "sent to the office" for a variety of conduct problems and absentee patterns. The response, after careful planning, was a two-pronged approach--consisting of a major tutoring program and a RESTART classroom. Each will be described in turn.

The tutorial program involves a total of 280 students--23% of enrollment--including 90 learning disabled and 10 Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) students. A director, special-education teachers, and a staff of paraprofessionals operate a large classroom complex with multiple work spaces in interconnected rooms. The tutoring program staff requests (and is successful in obtaining) information from regular classroom teachers concerning assignments, quizzes and exams for each of the enrolled

students. The goal of tutoring sessions (some individual, some small-group) is then to prepare the student to perform adequately in the regular classroom. Also, essential study habits, such as reviewing for exams, are repeatedly practiced and reinforced. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss individual students and the flow of activities during each classroom period of the day. A full seven-period program is in operation, with numbers ranging from four to 23 students per period.

Overall effects of the tutoring program have included a reduction in the number of referrals "to the office," increased preparation for classroom work and exams by at-risk students, and a general decrease in the level of frustration among regular classroom teachers. These teachers have learned to trade the time spent in preparing notes on assignments for the reduction in frustration caused by dealing with the occasionally disruptive at-risk students in the classroom group.

While the tutoring program focuses mainly on academic skill deficits, the RESTART classroom concentrates on students with more severe behavioral or attendance patterns. Students are assigned to RESTART following an expulsion or suspension, or following a temporary dropout period. The RESTART classroom is supervised by one classified staff member who works under the guidance of the tutoring program director. The classroom is designed with study carrels (booths), and is conducted in nearly complete quiet, with each student working intently on make-up assignments to replace those missed during their period of absence. The goal is to prepare the student for re-entry into the regular classroom using a neutral, nonpunitive environment that is firm, yet supportive and respectful. RESTART students are scheduled for lunch and other activities on a different timeline than other students so that socializing with friends is minimized. This social minimization is necessary because of the reinforcing consequences of "interaction as usual," which could simply reward suspensions or absenteeisms.

Although the RESTART method is not 100% effective with all at-risk students, it does seem to dramatically reverse the old habits of students who sincerely wish to "try again" to reinstate themselves. Students who successfully complete work in the RESTART classroom are then included in the tutoring program for further monitoring and individual attention.

The implications of the program at Forest Grove are striking. A highly individualized program is aimed at the significant number of students (280 or 23%) who would otherwise flounder in regular classroom instruction. An extensive team approach is used, with staff that includes a mixture of teachers, classified staff, aides, and a highly energetic director who projects a deep commitment to the at-risk students. The use of paraprofessional staff provides a highly cost-effective program, given the number of students served. Also, a unique innovation is achieved by integrating special-education services for the Learning Disabled (LD) and EMR students into a larger program, thus reducing the separateness and stigma often attached to such students.

Additional elements in the Forest Grove program include extensive vocational and prevocational placements and projects, and adapted graduation requirements in special cases.

For further information, contact Ellen Stevens, Principal, Forest Grove High School, 1343 Pacific Avenue, Forest Grove, Oregon 97116.

PROJECTS

Numerous project ideas were identified in the survey of all Oregon school districts and in the review of literature on at-risk youth. Again, due to space limitations and the need to focus, only a few of the most promising examples are related here. These projects can be classified into the following categories:

1. Educational (academic skills)
2. Alcohol and drug awareness and treatment
3. Health and mental health
4. Teen pregnancy
5. Family services
6. Vocational and prevocational programs
7. Counseling and guidance
8. Staff development
9. Community action

Examples in each of these areas will be briefly described.

Educational Projects.

The tutorial program at Forest Grove High School is a prime example of an individualized program aimed at academic skill development and improved study habits. In addition, Forest Grove provides a modified-diploma series for a few qualifying individuals. This adapts graduation requirements and includes extensive work on relevant areas such as personal finance. Klamath Union High School has also experimented with a modified diploma program.

A number of other schools have also instituted or proposed projects aimed at increasing the study skills and study habits of at-risk youth. Albany School District proposed a supervised tutorial class to assist learning-disabled students or low-achievers who were entering challenging regular classrooms. McKay High School in Salem has a monitoring program for incoming freshmen who may need improvements in study skills. In the smallest school districts, such as Dufur (Wasco County, enrollment 55 at high school), individuals such as the school secretary, a local youth pastor, and a "motherly" aide volunteer to assist particular students who are struggling with assignments.

Alcohol and Drug Projects.

The most visible and effective project in Oregon at this time appears to be the IMPACT program offered by Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene. Numerous school districts--some at considerable distance from Eugene--have participated, with teachers and staff being trained in methods of intervening in student and family situations. Thus the goal is to impact many students over a period of years. This is emphasized by equipping school personnel rather than attempting to treat a few individual students directly.

Another promising approach, more of an "awareness" project, is the various "refusal skills" curricula. These are aimed at helping students to "say no" in an effective and interpersonally acceptable way. All the middle schools in the Eugene School District are implementing this curriculum at the sixth-grade level.

Health and Mental Health.

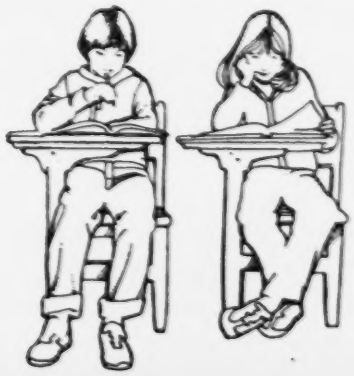
The North Eugene High School health center project is an example of an innovative new approach. The center or clinic is staffed by a pediatric nurse practitioner, a full-time certified

school nurse, and a consulting physician with training in adolescent medicine. The clinic offers screening and physical exams for medical and psychosocial or stress conditions. In the author's phone interview, staff members indicated the screening has identified diverse medical needs ranging from inadequate family medical care to the lack of adequate breakfasts and poor eating habits. The staff also participates in classroom instruction on health and medical topics. The project is currently funded by the State Health Department.

Teen Pregnancy.

For female at-risk students, teenage pregnancy is a frequent reason for dropping out. Although school-based health clinics with direct involvement in pregnancy counseling are highly controversial at this time, some clinics such as the North Eugene High School health center include the less-controversial counseling option of abstinence. This has been made particularly relevant today by the amount of media attention focused on the prospects of sexually-transmitted social diseases.

The Opportunity Center, a highly effective alternative-school program in Eugene, also includes a Teen Parent Program keyed to the needs of this particular group. As Natriello, McDill, and Pallas recommended in 1985, educational services such as alternative programs can offer evening classes or flexible time schedules that are more realistic for the teen parent and/or working student than the rigid schedule of the regular high school program.



Family Services.

Project RETURN in the Portland Public Schools is an example of a project that impacts families as well as individual students. The goal of this project is to decrease absenteeism and return students to classroom attendance following a referral for excessive absences. After contacting parents, an attendance clerk and project coordinator try to develop an individualized plan for returning the student to regular attendance.

The Eugene Public School District has several innovative projects including the parent trainer, a district-funded full-time equivalent (FTE) person who contacts parents experiencing difficulty with their children and the schools. Small group and individual counseling sessions are held to increase parental skills and to monitor family/school interaction. In addition, teacher-parent consultants (4 FTE) act on referrals--mostly for at-risk students--to consult with classroom teachers and parents in the management of severe behavior problems.

Vocational and Prevocational Projects.

One of the most effective projects in vocational areas has been the Construction Cluster in the Salem School District. A small group of selected students, often at-risk youth, join a team that constructs an actual residential house, which is later sold on the real-estate market in order to regenerate funding for the program. This "true-to-life" project requires expert coordination and dedication but appears to be highly rewarding and effective with the small group of students it serves.

Forest Grove High School includes a unique element in its vocational program for at-risk students--training in job interview skills. Actual business and trades people from the community are invited to come and interview students, who are then rated

on their job-interview skills. The judgment of "employable or not employable" takes on a realism in this project that cannot be duplicated through textbooks or media. Students often need to radically alter their interview methods.

Other types of vocational projects, particularly in the smaller or rural districts, arise from the talents of individual teachers. For example, the graphics arts teacher in Chenowith, near The Dalles, has been highly successful in placing several students in jobs following involvement in school-based graphics projects.

Counseling and Guidance.

One uncommon and unconventional counseling device is the Mentor/Advocate project in the Santa Clara Elementary School north of Eugene, Oregon. The goal of this project is to provide at-risk students with adult advocates. These advocates extend counsel, encouragement, and general social recognition to selected students who may be unaware they are even included in a formal program. The 28 certified and classified staff members who are advocates volunteer for the project. An advocate makes contact with a student at least once a week, chatting with the student at lunch, sending encouraging notes, and informally sharing interests and hobbies. The advocates are listeners and "buddies" and may help with homework or simply provide feedback. The results of the project include increased attendance, an exchange of information between advocates and classroom teachers leading to enhanced classroom methods, and increased self esteem among targeted students. It should be especially noted that the term "advocate" is used only by staff members. Students know advocates only as special friends or informal acquaintances.

Staff Development.

The premiere example of staff development related to at-risk youth in Oregon is the major project by the Springfield School District, under the direction of Nancy Golden of the District Personnel Office. Following the decision by the District to place a year-long priority on at-risk youth, a multi-faceted project that included the following elements was launched.

1. Publication of a staff newsletter to report monthly progress on at-risk activities.

2. A needs assessment survey, conducted to identify all current efforts and needs of at-risk youth, resulting in a focusing of objectives on classroom methods of dealing with at-risk students.

3. Inservice workshops including those of Jerry Conrath (Conrath, 1986), which consisted of initial motivational sessions and in-depth classroom methodology training.

4. Coaching--the method of pairing two teachers who coach each other, in a non-judgmental way, to effectively implement the skills learned in the inservice workshops.

5. Implementation of individual building projects.

6. A block grant program at the middle-school level which created 2 FTE for tutoring at-risk students taken from regular classes one period per day to teach study skills, conflict resolution, communication with parents, and personal problem solving.

NOTE: For further information contact Nancy Golden (503-726-3203) at Springfield School District, 525 Mill Street, Springfield, OR 97477.

Community Action.

In addition to numerous fine community-awareness programs for drug abuse, the best example of community action is the Leaders Roundtable Planning Project in Portland. This is a collaborative effort among diverse city organizations including the Portland Public Schools, the Portland Urban League, the Private Industry Council, the City of Portland, Youth Service Centers, and the Chamber of Commerce Business Youth Exchange. Workgroups comprised of representatives from each organization have discussed and recommended the following kinds of ideas for at-risk students: (1) school commitment to employability as an outcome of high school for all students, (2) linkages between schools and other agencies, and (3) methods of overcoming employers' biases toward youth.

Another promising approach was recently recommended by a Citizen's Advisory Committee on Student Retention for the Albany (OR) School District. This committee proposed hiring a community volunteer services coordinator to develop a network of businesses and individuals who would be willing to spend time and effort to help students. A network of "homework houses" was also proposed, along with an "adopt a school" program for local businesses. A "homework hotline" serviced by volunteers was included. The committee felt considerable advantages would be gained for the outlay of approximately one FTE coordinator position.

Conclusion

This report is the result of a recent survey of the most promising systems, programs and projects currently in operation in Oregon schools. An important concept gained by the study is that there is an increasing level of school and community commitment to the educational and personal needs of at-risk youth. One of the limitations of the study is that it is not possible to mention all of the ideas and programs available in the schools of this state.

The research was undertaken to assist school districts in the development of dropout prevention programs. However, some particular policy and program questions and issues still need to be studied and answered in coming months.

The problems of at-risk youth are not unique to Oregon. As more national data become available, as stories of successful solutions are reported from other areas, everyone--from the state agency level down to the local community, district, teacher, and parent--needs to remain alert. The educational system must be ready and willing to adapt, to incorporate, to revise, to rebuild, above all to cooperate and work together to solve this threat to our challenge of providing equity and access as well as excellence in public education for all students.

References

Achenbach, T. (1979) "The child behavior profile: An empirically based system for assessing children's behavioral problems and competencies. "*International Journal of Mental Health, VII*, pp. 3-4, 26-40.

Arter, J.A. (1986) *Assessing school and classroom climate: A consumer's guide*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (November, 1986).

Brookover, W.B., & Lezotte, L.W. (1979) Changes in *school characteristics coincident with changes in student achievement*. East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University.

Conrath, J. (1984) "Snatching victory from the jaws of learning defeat: How one school fought the dropout blitz." *Contemporary Education, LVI(1)*, pp. 36-38.

Conrath, J. (1986) "Tough and disengaged? How about defeated!" *Oregon Counseling Journal* (March, 1986) pp.22-26.

deJung, J.E., & Duckworth, K. (1986, April) "Measuring student absences in the high school." Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco. (Available from Center for Policy and Management, College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403)

Dolan, L.J., & Enos, M.M. (1985) *School Attitude Measure*. Iowa City, IA: American Testronics.

Edmonds, R.R. (1979) "Effective schools for the urban poor." *Educational Leadership, XXXVII*, pp. 15-27.

Edmonds, R.R. (1981) "Making public schools effective." *Social Policy, XII(2)*, pp. 56-60.

Frederickson, J.R. (1975) *School effectiveness and equality of educational opportunity*. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation.

Grice, M.L. (1986) *Project RETURN: Interim report*. Portland, OR: Portland Public Schools.

Levin, H. (1972) *The costs to the nation of inadequate education*. Report to the Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, U.S. Senate. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Management Information Services (1986) "High school profiles." Portland, OR: Portland Public Schools.

Mann, D. (1985) "Action on dropouts." *Educational Leadership, XLIII(1)*, pp. 16-17.

Natriello, G., McDill, E.L., & Pallas, A.M. (1985) "School reform and potential dropouts." *Educational Leadership, XLIII(1)*, pp. 10-14.

Peng, S.S., & Takai, R.T. (1983) *High School dropouts: Descriptive information from high school and beyond.* National Center for Educational Statistics Bulletin (November).

Piers, E. (1984) *Manual for the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale.* Los Angeles, CA: Western Psychological Services.

Purkey, S.C., & Smith, M.S. (1983) "Effective schools--A review." *Elementary School Journal, XXCIII(4)*, pp. 427-452.

Research and Evaluation Department (1985) *Research summary on dropouts.* Portland, OR: Portland Public Schools.

Reynolds, W.M. (1984) "Depression in children and adolescents: Phenomenology, evaluation, and treatment." *School Psychology Review, XIII(2)*, pp. 171-182.

Roid, G.H. Report on a statewide survey of school districts: Youth at-risk programs and studies in Oregon schools. Salem, OR: Assessment Research (unpublished).

Schellenberg, S.J. (1985) *Patterns of graduation and dropping out in the class of "84 District 4J.* Eugene, OR: Eugene Public School District 4J.

Sexton, P.W. (1985) "Trying to make it real compared to what? Implications of high school dropout statistics." *Journal of Educational Equity and Leadership, V(2)*, pp. 92-106.

Walker, H.M., & Severson, H. (1985) *Standardized screening and identification of behavior disordered pupils in the elementary age range: Rationale, procedures, and guidelines.* Eugene, OR: Center on Human Development, University of Oregon.

Yagi, K. (1986) *Private alternative schools programs.* Evaluation report (March, 1986) Portland, OR: Portland Public Schools.